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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10
EUR-12 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /139 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7738
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KABUL
RUMJHTJNAMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 1276
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ILO, ELAB, PK
SUBJECT: ILO: 1978 CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 1279*7

1. SUMMARY: TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A CALL ON THE CENTRAL LABOR ADVISER, MAHMOOD AKHTAR, POLCOUNS DREW ON REFTEL IN DISCUSSING US VIEWS ON ILO AND THE 1978 CONFERENCE. ALSO PRESENT AT MEETING WAS JOINT SECRETARY FOR LABOR, ASHRAF ALI. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL DISCUSSION, AKHTAR RECALLED 1975 HOROWITZ VISIT AND STATED THAT AS RESULT OF THAT VISIT PAKISTAN WAS FULLY FAMILIAR WITH US POJSTION. AKHTAR SAID, "SPEAKING FRANKLY," HE REALIZES THAT THERE ARE DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN US AND PAKISTAN ON
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CERTAIN ILO ISSUES. SPECIFICALLY, AKHTAR SAID, PAKISTAN FEELS THAT THE GOVERNING BODY (GB) OF THE ILO SHOULD BE EXPANDED AND SHOULD INCLUDE ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE THIRD WORLD. PAKISTAN IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT INDIA HAS A PERMANENT POSITION ON THE GB, A SITUATION PAKISTAN VIEWS AS POTENTIALLY INIMICAL TO ITS INTERESTS.

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3. REGARDING THE POLITICIZATION OF THE ILO, AKHTAR SAID THAT IT WAS PAKISTAN'S VIEW THAT IT IS DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO DIVORCE POLITICS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL BODY LIKE THE ILO. WHAT IS DEFINED AS POLITICS BY ONE COUNTRY IS NOT NECESSARILY CONSIDERED AS SUCH BY ANOTHER. AKHTAR SAID THAT PAKISTAN HAS NEVER FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS FOR THE US WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ILO BUT THAT NEVERTHELESS PAKISTAN HOPES THE US WILL RECONSIDER ITS DECISION AND REJOIN THE ORGANIZATION. THE US WITHDRAWAL, AKHTAR SAID, LEFT THE FIELD OPEN FOR THE SOVIETS TO MANIPULATE THE ILO TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE US, PAKISTAN, AND THEIR FRIENDS.

4. ON THE APPLICATION OF DOUBLE STANDARDS, AKHTAR SAID THAT PAKISTAN SYMPATHIZES WITH THE US. HE CITED EXAMPLES OF WFTU-INSPIRED ARTICLES CONDEMNING PAK LABOR PRACTICES UNDER THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION. AKHTAR COMPLAINED THAT WHILE INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION IS FREQUENTLY DIRECTED AT PAKISTAN FOR ITS LABOR PRACTICES, LITTLE OR NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT INDIA'S LABOR STRIFE OR THE SUPPRESSION OF A FREE LABOR MOVEMENT IN THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. AKHTAR WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET ABOUT THIS BUT WHEN THE QUESTION OF WHAT COULD BE DONE TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION WAS RAISED, AKHTAR REITERATED A REFRAIN COMMONLY HEARD HERE -- THAT PAKISTAN AS A POOR COUNTRY AND A MEMBER OF THE THIRD WORLD CANNOT GET AHEAD OF ITS THIRD WORLD FRIENDS ON THESE QUESTIONS. AKHTAR SAID, HOWEVER, THAT PAKISTAN PLAYS A MODERATING, CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE "BEHIND THE SCENES" AND WILL
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CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

5. COMMENT: AKHTAR, WHO RANKS FOURTH IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND MANPOWER, IS ONE OF THE MORE OUTSPOKEN OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRY. HE IS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE US POSITION ON THE ILO AND WAS QUITE FRANK IN NOTING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US AND PAKISTANI POSITIONS ON SELECTED ISSUES. HIS COMMENTS INDICATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN PAKISTAN'S POSITION ON ILO ISSUES OF INTEREST, THE US SINCE THE US WITHDRAWAL. BASICALLY, AKHTAR IS CORRECT IN ASSERTING THAT AMONG THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES PAKISTAN HAS ON OCCASION BEEN ABLE TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN MODERATING THE MORE EXTREME POSITIONS PUT FORTH BY RADICAL THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. BUT, AS AKHTAR NOTED, PAKISTAN WILL NOT BE CAUGHT "OUT FRONT" ON ISSUES THAT INTEREST THE THIRD WORLD OR AFFECT ITS RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES. IN THE CASE OF THE ILO, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT PAKISTAN WILL CONTINUE TO GO ALONG WITH MOST ARAB AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES BUT AT THE SAME TIME WILL WORK QUIETLY TO ATTEMPT MODERATION OF THE MORE EXTREME POSITIONS OF THE RADICAL STATES.
HUMMEL

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